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		<b>EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:</b> 1—Official Business 2—Necessaril
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**Those favoring** the amendment contended:

## Argument 1:

The Craig amendment has been offered as an alternative to the Boxer/Kohl amendment. The Boxer/Kohl amendment would impose a severe mandate on a constitutional right on the false assumption that putting trigger locks on guns is the best way to reduce accidental shootings. By itself, the amendment could end up causing more injuries than it would prevent. The best solution is training in the proper handling of a firearm. When access to a firearm is not immediately needed for personal protection, it should be unloaded, with the ammunition in one place and the firearm securely stored elsewhere. If a trigger-lock (or child-safety lock as our colleagues have dubbed it for this debate) is used, it should be used on an unloaded gun. Most firearm manufacturers strongly recommend against putting a trigger-lock on a loaded gun because if the gun is dropped or jostled a jamming of the trigger lock object that surrounds the encasing for the trigger could cause it to fire. Mandating that a trigger lock, or any other safety device, be sold with each gun would give people the false impression that the device was all that was necessary to keep the gun stored securely. We absolutely do not want to give that false impression.

To bolster their case, some Senators have used very misleading statistics. For instance, they have said that more than 5,000 children per year are killed by firearms. They do not mention that they are counting children up to age 19, and that 84 percent of those deaths are homicides or suicides of 15-year-olds to 19-year-olds. Further, they do not mention that the number of accidental deaths for children under the age of 15 has been steadily declining for decades, even though gun ownership has gone up by 400 percent since 1930. In 1995, the annual number of accidental firearm accidents among children under 15 reached a record low--195 children out of the United States' total population of 265 million people. Those deaths were tragic, and we should work to further reduce the number of accidental firearm deaths of children, as we should work to reduce all other accidental deaths of children. For children, 1.5 percent of accidental deaths are from firearms; 4.8 percent are from drowning; 11 percent are from poisoning; 13.5 percent are from falling. For these other causes of accidental death, our colleagues are not proposing legislation. Frankly, some people are more concerned with firearm deaths because they are opposed to the constitutional right to keep and bear arms.

The Craig amendment would offer a sensible alternative. It would require firearms dealers to have available for purchase gun safety and gun storage devices. Dealers who did not comply would lose their licenses. It would be a simple licensing requirement that every dealer would follow. If someone kept their guns in a lockbox, and had additional room in that lockbox, it would not make sense to require that person to buy a new storage box or a trigger lock. Further, purchasers of guns would not be given the false impression that because their gun came with a trigger lock, all they would need to do to keep it secure would be to put on the lock when they were not using it. The amendment would be entirely tort neutral. It would not establish a standard of care, nor would it allow evidence regarding compliance or noncompliance with this requirement to be admissible in court. Finally, the amendment would authorize State and local law enforcement authorities to use Byrne Grant funding to train members of the public in the safe possession, carry, and use of firearms. Training is the best way to prevent firearm accidents. We therefore strongly urge our colleagues to vote in favor of the Craig amendment, and to then vote to reject the Boxer/Kohl amendment.

## Argument 2:

We favor making gun dealers have gun safety devices available for gun buyers, and we favor training in the safe use of firearms. We also favor requiring the purchase of a gun safety device with every gun purchase. Therefore, we support both amendments.

**Those opposing** the amendment contended:

The Craig amendment is not strong enough. Unlike the Boxer/Kohl amendment, it would not require the sale of child-safety locks with each gun sale; it would only require that they be available on the premises. Then, it would add that it would be acceptable for them to be temporarily unavailable for certain reasons, such as that they might be out of stock. Finally, it would add that if a dealer did not comply, the evidence of that noncompliance could not be used against him in court. In contrast, the Boxer/Kohl amendment would make a real difference in safety. According to the Centers for Disease Control, 1.2 million children have access to guns in the home. According to a survey sponsored by the National Institutes of Justice, 34 percent of handgun owners store their guns unlocked and loaded. The United States has 265 million people and 300 million guns. Each year, approximately 5,000 children are killed by gunfire, and about 400 of those deaths are accidental. We have all heard the horror stories of a young child, sometimes only a few years old, finding a loaded gun and killing a playmate. The Boxer/Kohl amendment, with a very simple mandate, would stop many such tragedies. We urge our colleagues to support the Boxer/Kohl amendment, and to reject the Craig amendment.